

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Fact Sheet

The **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program** provides direct patient care to victims of sexual assault who present to SANE designated emergency departments and urgent care centers. The SANEs deliver coordinated, expert forensic and medical care necessary to increase successful prosecution of sex offenders and to assure essential medical intervention to victims of assault age 12 and over. By the end of FY 05, the SANE Program will have cared for over 3,600 victims of sexual assault in the 23 designated SANE sites. ***Currently the program is undergoing Statewide certification for Pediatric SANE's to care for victims of assault under the age of 12.***

SANE FACTS

SANE's in Action

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) are specially trained and certified professionals skilled in performing quality forensic medical-legal exams. Should a case go to trial, the SANEs are then available to testify
- SANEs are available by beeper and respond within 40-60 minutes to the designated SANE site ready to care for the victim of sexual assault
- SANEs will document the account of the assault, perform necessary medical exams, testing and treatment, then collect crucial, time sensitive evidence using the Massachusetts Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit distributed by the Executive Office of Public Safety
- A forensic exam performed by a SANE can take up to 4 hours from beginning to discharge of the patient.
- SANEs provide medical care to survivors without interruption, therefore maintaining the chain of evidence from the exam
- SANEs perform exams with state of the art forensic equipment and supplies and are kept up to date with the latest in forensic science developments
- SANEs receive expert training, supervision, and quality assurance monitoring
- SANEs provide preventative treatment for HIV, STDs, and pregnancy

SANE Enhances Public Safety through Increased Prosecution of Rapists

- SANEs have testified and provided quality forensic evidence in 54 sexual assault trials of which, 51 have resulted in conviction. Evidence collection along with SANE testimony were important elements in achieving convictions in all of the cases.
- In FY'02 through FY'04 evidence submitted to the Boston and State Police Crime Lab revealed that overall, SANEs are collecting better evidence than non-SANE providers
- Massachusetts DA's anecdotally report alleged perpetrators are more likely to plead guilty before trial when the prosecution presents evidence collected by SANEs, saving enormous prosecution costs.
- Ongoing developments in the science of evidence collection, e.g. DNA testing, require a higher level of expertise and consistency in the collection of evidence for sexual assault cases.
- Standardizing the preservation of the chain of evidence by:
 - Providing expertise by quickly and uniformly incorporating improvements in forensic evidence collection techniques
 - Ensuring that SANE evidence is transported properly to the proper crime lab
 - Monitoring the quality of evidence submitted to the crime lab

SANE has Broad Criminal Justice and Health Care Community Endorsement and Support

- The *Emergency Nurses Association* has endorsed the MA SANE Program as a national model
- Members of the **Massachusetts SANE Board** include:

Boston Police Sexual Assault Unit
Department of Social Services
MA District Attorney's Association
MA Office for Victim Assistance
Emergency Nurses Association
Boston Police and State Crime Labs

Jane Doe Inc, the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
Disabled Persons Protection Commission
Massachusetts College of Emergency Physicians
Massachusetts Nurses Association
Executive Office of Public Safety, Programs Division

RECENT SANE PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

This multi-disciplinary, statewide collaboration has resulted in numerous advancements in the quality of care being delivered and the quality evidence being collected and preserved.

- **Since 1998 there has been a range of 95-100% successful prosecution rate in Massachusetts when a SANE has collected evidence and testified in court.**
- In collaboration with the Executive Office of Public Safety (EOPS), new date rape drug testing guidelines for sexual assault victims are being implemented statewide at the Massachusetts State Police Crime lab. Data from this testing has yielded a significant number of patients with date rape drugs in their systems during the time of the assault. **This evidence collection kit in Massachusetts is now used by the manufacturer as the national standard.**
- **In collaboration with the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, a toll free hotline was established for victims who wish to obtain toxicology results from unreported cases. (866-269-4265) Victims who wish to receive results from reported cases can contact their local DA's office.**
- Protocol developments now enable victims of sexual assault to access the results of date rape drug testing without having to report with police
- To increase the compliance rate for health care provider mandatory reporting for sexual assault cases, the Executive Office of Public Safety uses the SANE documentation forms as the statewide mandatory reporting form. As a result, there has been an increase in the reporting by 700%.
- The SANE Program has offered statewide trainings to Emergency Department providers on the standards of evidence collection and **the SANE Program has released and distributed an instructional video for health care providers with tools and techniques for collecting quality forensic evidence.**
- The SANE Program has completed an intensive collaboration with the Sexual Abuse Intervention Network (SAIN), the Executive Office of Public Safety, clinical experts, and the Child Advocacy Centers which has produced statewide recommendations and guidelines for the delivery of care and evidence collection for child victims of sexual abuse and assault under the age of 12. In addition a Pediatric Evidence Collection Kit has been produced with overarching principles of "Do No Harm" for patients under the age of 12.
- In order to provide services to the most injured sexual assault patients who may immediately be admitted to intensive care units, protocols now allow SANEs to see victims outside of the ED setting

SANE Designated Hospitals/ Urgent Care Centers for FY 05:

Baystate Medical Center	Charlton Memorial Hospital	Nantucket Cottage Hospital
Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital	Cooley-Dickinson Hospital	Newton Wellesley Hospital
Boston Medical Center	Falmouth Hospital	St. Luke's Hospital
Brigham & Women's Hospital	Harrington Hospital	Tobey Hospital
Brockton Hospital	Jordan Hospital	UMass Memorial Hospital
Cambridge Hospital	Lawrence General Hospital	UMass University Hospital
Cape Cod Hospital	Massachusetts General Hospital	UMass Amherst Health Services
	Morton Hospital	Worcester Medical Center

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and Rape Crisis Center Community-Based Counselors

The SANE Response Team consists of SANEs delivering the medical/forensic component and the Rape Crisis Centers providing the community-based support and advocacy. Through an on-call beeper system linked with the SANE Program, the **Rape Crisis Center Community-Based Counselors** deliver necessary, immediate crisis intervention and support in the hospital emergency department as well as medical and legal follow-up and resolution through counseling and advocacy.

The SANE Program also coordinates with district attorneys, medical providers, law enforcement, Boston and State Police Crime Labs, and community-based services to create an efficient and effective team of professionals.

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